While we admit that he might have proceeded deeper into a sort of interminable description, we doubt whether he would have improved by it either the lucidness or the estimation of his work. He has, we think, preserved a very fair proportion between the value of his ideas, and the quantity of language into which he has thrown them; a merit of no small importance, considering the brevity of human life, and the necessity of our working up its scraps of time to the best advantage.

We think it one of the most remarkable faults of modern medical literature, and especially that of our British brethren, on almost all the subjects discussed by them, that they seem to dread and to put off the development of the idea which they wish to inculcate, so that it requires no small patience and good nature to hunt out what they mean. We have often thought that it would be an excellent plan for those diffuse writers, to give for the benefit of impatient readers an algebraical statement of what they intend, and to leave for the patient ones the body of their productions, with all its circumlocutions and superfluities. There are many men whose reputation would be much benefited by presenting their ideas prominently and disencumbered. We have thus disposed of Mr. Meckel's apologetic name for what we consider a sufficiently complete system of anatomy.

Dr. Doane has performed his duty of translator in a manner extremely creditable to him, and, so far as we can judge, with general accuracy. He certainly deserves praise for his constancy in getting through an English version of more than fifteen hundred closely printed pages, and we hope that he will be well rewarded in reputation and advantage for this effort to place before the American student a work of such decided value. By persons conversant with German, the French translation has long ago been declared as defective in representing the ideas of Mr. Meckel on several points, and sometimes in making him say contradictory things. This of course would be a radical objection to an English version, taken from the French as the present is, without some guard against these errors, but from the preface of the translator it gives us pleasure to perceive that Dr. Doane has had the assistance of Dr. Alfred C. Post, whom he represents as a good German scholar, in detecting and correcting these errors. It perhaps would have been more satisfactory if he had given us a distinct pledge that they were all corrected or omitted. W. E. H.

XXI. *Elements of Practical Pharmacy.* By Robert John Kane, Professor of Chemistry to Apothecaries' Hall, Dublin, &c. Dublin, 1831. pp. 349. 12mo.

This work is intended for the student of pharmacy, and is certainly well adapted as a text book of the principles upon which the more important pharmaceutic operations are founded. The author has not attempted to explain all or even the greater proportion of the minor processes pursued in the manipulation of medicines, but has confined himself to an elucidation of a number of circumstances, with which a student of pharmacy is expected to be thoroughly acquainted, and yet which are not sufficiently detailed in any work in the English language. In fact, whilst on the continent of Europe, and more especially in France, numbers of excellent works have appeared on the elements of pharmacy, we are miserably deficient both in Great Britain and the United States,

in these important aids to the student. It is true we are in possession of several excellent commentaries on the different pharmacopœias, but these are only calculated for, and useful to the experienced pharmaceutist and not to the mere tyro.

In a short introduction, Mr. Kane gives some useful rules for the collection and preservation of various articles of the materia medica, with tables of the time of the year for the collection of each; the loss in drying, &c.; the author has here, as indeed is the case throughout his work, drawn largely on the stock of valuable information laid before the world by the members of the Societé de Pharmacie de Paris.

Part one is devoted to the consideration of the mechanical operations required in the determination or preparation of various drugs; one of the most frequently used of these is that of weighing, and there is no one in which a greater degree of accuracy is requisite, for an error even to an apparently trivial amount, may occasion consequences detrimental not only to the character of the operator, but also to the proper medicinal effects of the substances prepared by him. This part of Mr. Kane's treatise is excellent, being even more practically useful than that on the same subject in Faraday's valuable precepts, and is illustrated by a greater number of comparative tables of weights, &c. than are usually to be met with in works of this character. That however of drops and minims is inferior to that of Mr. Durand, in the American edition of the Manual of Materia Medica.

The second chapter is on the operations by which bodies are mechanically divided. These are of various kinds, but do not require any particular notice in this place; the results of all these processes, however, require other operations, which are next treated of by the author—those by which bodies are mechanically separated; these processes are various, and include the modes of separating solids from solids, solids from fluids, and fluids from each other. The next chapter takes up a diametrically opposite class of operations, or those by which bodies are mechanically mixed, which concludes this division of the work.

The second part is devoted to chemical processes, and opens with an introductory chapter on heat, as an agent in pharmaceutic operations, including the modes of estimating its degree as well as the modes of applying and regulating it; Mr. Kane's observations and directions on this subject are judicious and practical, but contain nothing that is peculiar or deserving of particular notice.

The second part itself is replete with instruction and will richly repay an attentive study; parts of it, however, we think is better calculated for the experienced pharmaceutist than for the beginner in the science, more especially those sections of it which refer to particular preparations. Taken as a whole, however, the work is admirably suited to supply the blank spoken of at the commencement of this notice, and entitles Mr. Kane to much praise for the clearness and judgment of his practical precepts, which he has very properly given without any admixture of theory or speculation. Much as has been done there is nevertheless still an opening for a work on the plan of Faraday's Chemical manipulations, giving those minutiæ of various pharmaceutic operations on which the beauty and even the efficacy of so many preparations are mainly dependent.

R. E. G.